

The inspection report calls Randolph a "poor training ground for future pilots."

"The instructor pilots at Randolph are sick of high 'OPTEMPO' [operational tempo]," says the memo. "Most said that they came to Randolph as a three-year break from being gone from home too much on deployment. Most of the pilots also said that they will be getting out of the Air Force as soon as their commitment is over."

"The pilots liked the quality of the mid-level leadership, but totally disliked their senior leadership. They stated that they did not trust senior leadership and that things are getting worse. In general they felt they were lied to, betrayed and treated very poorly."

Officers at the 940th Air Refueling Squadron complained of excessive training.

"Everyone complained that the number of days of mandatory training per year should be capped and purged of everything that is not mission essential or job critical," the memo said. "All of the politically correct, brainwashing, propaganda and white laboratory mouse training should be purged from the curriculum."

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for about 5 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair and thank my colleague from West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

THE BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, just a few thoughts about the budget agreement. There is still a lot of drafting going on, so to a certain extent I think all of us are at a little bit of a disadvantage in that we have not seen all of the specifics, but I would like to raise a couple of questions about this agreement, and I raise these questions given what I think is the important standard of fairness.

First of all, I hope that all Senators, Democrats and Republicans, will have before them the distributional data, that is to say some understanding as to who will benefit from these tax cuts, before we are asked to vote on the tax-cut part of this bill. It seems to me this is kind of a prerequisite for good public policy. I remain very skeptical that, indeed, these tax cuts, when you look at who is really going to benefit with each passing year, will not disproportionately go to those people who are least in need of any assistance. At the same time, I see a tradeoff that seems quite unacceptable. Every single time it looks like low-income and moderate-income families get the short end of

the stick. I think we should set the bar at a higher level, and I think those families should count. Let me just give but a couple of examples.

Mr. President, the child credit, we are now hearing from the White House, will go to families with incomes under \$30,000 a year or under \$28,000 a year, the argument being that, indeed, these families pay Social Security taxes and they should receive a child credit as well as those families with incomes over \$30,000 a year. But, as it turns out, families with incomes under \$16,000 a year are not going to receive any child care credit. I have had a chance to travel some around the country and visit with poor children, visit with low-income families. I don't understand how in the world we could be talking about fairness if, in fact, those families are not going to receive any of the child care credits, those families most in need.

Another example is on the higher education piece. I have said this over and over again, and I hope I am wrong, but I don't think I am. I was a teacher for 20 years. I spent a lot of time at the community colleges. Mr. President, if the tax credits are not refundable, then those students or those families with incomes under \$28,000 a year or \$27,000 a year, that are not going to have any tax liability, they are not going to receive any of the assistance. So when it comes to those students who have been least able to afford higher education, they are still going to be waiting for some of this assistance.

Add to that some of the concerns that I think all of us have to have about the cuts or reductions in payment in Medicare and medical assistance, in particular those of us—and I come from such a State—where we have strong rural communities. We have to worry about the negative impact this is going to have on rural health care providers. If we don't have hospitals or clinics, then we are not able to deliver the care out in our communities. We have to have concerns about the disproportionate effect this is going to have on our children's hospitals and public hospitals that have received a disproportionate amount of medical assistance because they serve a disproportionate number of low-income and moderate-income people.

So, the question really becomes: Where is the standard of fairness if the tax cuts still, in the main, go to the very top of the economic population and at the same time the benefits don't go to many, many hard-pressed families? We have not invested, in this budget agreement, one penny in rebuilding crumbling schools. As it turns out, families with incomes under \$16,000, with children, receive no help by way of the child credit. Those students from families with incomes \$23,000, \$24,000, \$25,000 a year are not going to benefit from the Hope scholarship unless it's a refundable tax credit. We are not investing in the schools, and at the same time we don't even

have the distributional data on who exactly is going to benefit from these tax cuts.

So I count myself as a skeptical Senator. And if I was going to be voting today, I would vote against this package. I do not think it meets the Minnesota standard of fairness. I think we should do better.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. SHELBY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, what is the pending business before the Senate?

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business of the Senate is to resume consideration of Senate bill 1022.

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 995

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the yeas and nays on the Kyl amendment No. 995 be vitiated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise in support of the amendment of my friend from Arizona.

As a preliminary matter, I should say that I would have hoped that this amendment would not be necessary. I do not believe there is any real difficulty in reconciling the provision from last year's omnibus appropriations bill prohibiting the use of judiciary's funds to pay for special masters appointed pre-PLRA with the PLRA's requirement that masters be paid only with such funds. I believe this can easily be done without violating the intent of the PLRA's authors, including my friend from Arizona and myself, that the PLRA's compensation and other requirements be applied to pre-PLRA masters.

The way to reconcile them is clear: the court can either proceed without a special master, or it can appoint a new one—or reappoint an old one—in the manner specified by the PLRA, thereby making the master eligible for payment under the terms of last year's rider. Indeed, in a discussion at the end of the last Congress, the distinguished chairman of the CSJ Appropriations Subcommittee and I agreed that this was the intended interpretation of the appropriations provision.